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OR,

# THE CYNIC.

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS.

<p>③ GEORGE LORDLY.....</p> <p>VERNON LORDLY.....</p> <p>PARSON HAWTHORNE.....</p> <p>HARLEY.....</p> <p>ADAM, (the old Sexton,).....</p> <p>BEALE.....</p> <p>MARY STILLWORTH.....</p> <p>ALICE HAWTHORNE.....</p> <p>HELEN.....</p> <p>JANE JONES.....</p> <p>Guests, Male and Female.</p>		<p><i>Holliday St. Theatre,</i> <i>Baltimore, 1859.</i></p> <p>Mr. C. Barton Hill</p> <p>" J. M. Craig</p> <p>" F. Chippendale</p> <p>" G. H. Clarke</p> <p>" W. H. Leake</p> <p>" Stuart Robson</p> <p>Mrs. W. C. Gladstone</p> <p>Miss Marian Watts</p> <p>Mrs. C. Hill</p> <p>Miss Rose Skerrett</p>
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**COSTUMES.** Modern in style, and suited to the station and character of the persons represented.

 This play is the exclusive property of JOHN T. FORD, Holliday Street Theatre, Baltimore, with whom managers or stars can negotiate for its production.

*Haw.* Robbing a friend to save a scoundrel. Indorsing for the romantic and saintly Syrian convert, whose voice was as a trumpet of the Lord at Elder Evans's last night — *at Elder Evans's last night*; and, would you believe it —

*Lord.* I believe any thing of converts. So much for last night — proceed. And this morning? Gently; proceed; don't omit the catastrophe.

*Haw.* It strangles me; it is enormous; past conjecture.

*Lord.* Will your note fall due to-day?

*Haw.* To-day. The fellow had the smile of a seraph.

*Lord.* Then I think I can finish your story.

*Haw.* Impossible. It is infamous beyond conception, infamous beyond expression. This morning — excuse this indignation, pardon this emotion — this morning. (*Chokes again.*)

*Lord.* (*Aside.*) He'll drop in a fit. This morning my old friend, Parson Hawthorne, couldn't find his Syrian convert, and Elder Evans couldn't find his wife.

*Haw.* Who has told you?

*Lord.* Ah, parson, the past is the prophet of the future. How deep is the rascal into you?

*Haw.* Rascal's too mild a word. Villain, sir, every inch a villain, and none the less a villain for having made a rogue of me. He had the voice of an angel, too.

*Lord.* I beg you, my dear Mr. Hawthorne —

*Haw.* Yes, sir, a rogue of me. I feel that whenever I put my name to paper, I put my hand into your pocket; but in spite of all, when the test comes, and the needy or stricken beg in the name of the Owner of all things, it seems to matter little from whose wallet the crust is drawn.

*Lord.* Provided the crust would choke your Syrian saint; but I fear that the largest amount of choking falls to you and Elder Evans. And this crust, Mr. Hawthorne, is it an extensive one, well burnt, done brown?

*Haw.* Five hundred — the villain! — voice of an angel — smile of a seraph!

*Lord.* Five hundred? that's small. Try a Turk next time. May be he'll let you off at half price, and do you the unspeakable favor of eloping with all the saints of your congregation. Don't droop, my old friend; this is *fun* for me, rare Roman *fun*, where beast springs, and sword gleams, and martyr bleeds — my only *fun*, and I am willing to pay for it. One gets so sick of shams and sweetmeats, of happiness and holiness. Have you never noticed how soon the palate, cloyed with sanctity and sugar, acquires a permanent relish for vinegar and woe? Frown not, my old friend. The world calls me a cynic; I must deserve the title.

*Haw.* The world does you great injustice, Mr. Lordly.

*Lord.* There's Adam, there; the gray old sexton would find nothing half so *funny* as seeing you and me toasted alive before his eyes. If agony were comie to him, may not a little moderate misfortune amuse me? The bosom snake that struck his brain, left her fang in my heart.

*Haw.* (*Aside.*) The old wound begins to bleed afresh. My son, remember —

*Lord.* Remember? Forget, you mean. Mr. Hawthorne, my brother Vernon is approaching us by this path, and I suspect that your daughter Alice will soon appear by that one. This is a singular coincidence, which happens exactly as the sun rises, and quite as punctually, Sundays and rainy days excepted.

*Haw.* There must be some mistake indeed. Sunrise is her hour for visiting the poor.

*Lord.* Poor Vernon! However, as I must speak fast, Vernon is betrothed, as you know, to my ward, Miss Stillworth, and as I hope to see them shortly united, I would suggest the propriety of cautioning Miss Alice, in her visits to the poor, against — well, too much charity. Let us step behind these trees, and you may shortly witness the coincidence I mentioned.

*Haw.* Can she be so imprudent —

*Lord.* As for your Syrian saint, leave him and his legacy to me. It is too late, I fear, to save Elder Evans from dishonor, but it shall be my pride and privilege to protect your note.

*Adam.* She went that way, she will come that way. As sure as the sun shines, she will come that way!

*Lord.* Listen to that voice of woe. Will Elder Evans watch for his wife, as that withered, witless wreck watches for his daughter? Ah, Mr. Hawthorne, dollars and cents count little in the long sum of human life. Step aside; Vernon has not seen you yet. Behind that laurel.

*Haw.* Do they meet regularly?

*Lord.* Judge for yourself. (*Leading him off, 2 E. L. H.*)

*Enter VERNON, 1 E. L. H.*

*Ver.* (*Absorbed in thought.*) I'd give my left arm to the elbow to have this affair with Mary Stillworth off. We are both so mortally sick of each other that we shudder when we meet; and yet my wise brother George swears my neglect is killing her. She's frail enough, Heaven knows, and it's quite a meditation on death to look at her shoulders. But it's none of my doing. Those blessed Greek plays which she and George are eternally cramming have done it. What keeps Alice?

*Enter LORDLY, L. H. 2 E.*

By all that's wonderful, my brother George! What can bring his serene highness to the Grotto at sunrise? George, I'll keep you in quail till Christmas, if you'll explain your being here at this hour.

*Lord.* (*Down L. H.*) To gather laurel for the day we celebrate.

*Ver.* (*On R. H.*) And pray what day do we celebrate?

*Lord.* The first of November, our Mary's birthday.

*Ver.* These anniversaries are deuced hard to remember. — (*Aside.*) If Alice comes now, it will be awkward.

*Lord.* Vernon —

*Ver.* (*Aside.*) Now for a scene. High tragedy.

*Lord.* Two years ago, when first betrothed to you, Mary Stillworth was a blooming girl, and now——

*Ver. (Aside.)* St. Anthony might safely use her for a death's head and cross bones. — She lives on poetry, George, and that's short commons, you know.

*Lord.* She scares me with her pale cheek and sad eyes. Your neglect——

*Ver.* My neglect! Good Heaven, George, what cares Mary Stillworth about my last right and left in the swamp — or how stiffly the pointer pup backed Don — or how nearly I grazed life everlasting, as Caliph thundered down Devil's Den, hard on the fox? What know I, a plain, prose brute — what know I about the Princess and Lippo Lippi, and Andrea, and the Casa Guidi windows, and the long Rosary of Genius, that you and she are eternally telling? And then, brother, between ourselves, the woman's an icicle.

*Lord.* Let not her glitter daunt you — a breath can melt her. Tell her a tale of glory, her brown eye trembles like a hero's crest; tell her a tale of sorrow, it glistens like a dewy night. An icicle! Come to my library and watch her, as she sits with me.

*Reënter* HAWTHORNE, L. H. 2 E.

*Ver.* Ay, brother, as she sits with *you*; but when she sits with *me*? Ten thousand feet above me, she strikes straight for the sun, with, now and then, a downward glance for my benefit. If I take her hand, she looks like a nun; if I approximate her lips, the North Pole's a furnace to her; if I threaten her waist, she shrinks as if my arm were an anaconda.

*Lord.* And Miss Hawthorne's waist, Vernon — But I beg pardon — the young lady herself is approaching.

*Enter* ALICE, 1 E. R. H.

*Haw. (Coming down R. c.)* Verily, it is my own child, my daughter, Alice.

*Ver.* As I'm a sinner, old Melchisedek himself! I see it all, George — I'm surrounded. (*Retires up a little.*)

*Alice. (On R. H. s., seeing both.)* My father! Mr. Lordly!

*Haw.* Mistress Alice, although an act of love and an act of charity are synonymous in our church service, yet it is wiser not to confound them in common practice.

*Lord. (Taking VERNON aside, L. H.)* Vernon, in mercy to Mary Stillworth — in justice to your own honor — let this little episode with Alice die to-day. Whatever vows ——

*Ver.* There are none. It was our misfortune to meet — our folly to love — and it is now our duty to part. But, to borrow your own language, brother, — the flowers do not cease to bloom because the ploughshare must soon pass over them.

*Haw. (Aside to ALICE.)* Alice Hawthorne, there is a lesson which youth cannot too soon be taught: love is loveliest when the slave of honor and duty. Choose between Vernon's attentions and my esteem.

Lord. (*Aside to HAWTHORNE, and retiring with him up centre, L. H.*) We have stunned them. Let us retire. They will come to presently.

Alice. (*After a long pause.*) Vernon, I was never so put out in my life. I could cry for shame! How cruelly they misunderstood us! Why, the idea of my encouraging your attentions!

Ver. (*Dropping his head.*) O Lord! —

Alice. I mean *seriously* encouraging them — and you all the while engaged to another! Cruel, wasn't it? As if any woman could do such a thing!

Ver. Yes — ah — precisely — *could* do such a thing.

Alice. It is all nothing for you — but imagine *my* agony at being taken for a flirt. O, it is too insulting, when one feels so perfectly innocent, too — for you know that I never gave you the slightest encouragement —

Ver. Alice!

Alice. Do drive that great wasp away! A flirt! — I a flirt? I would rather die than countenance such a slander. Good by. I shall miss your guitar and your quail suppers in the long winter evenings —

Ver. And before spring you will have coaxed another fool to lay his heart at your feet.

Alice. And is there any better resting place for a man's heart than at a true woman's feet?

Ver. Dare you call yourself a true woman when you so flip-pantly disclaim our love?

Alice. (*Starting.*) Our *love*! Pray when — where — how — was our love ever plighted?

Ver. When? to-day — yesterday — daily — hourly, for months. Where? here — every where — beneath the chestnuts of that hill — beside the sweet briers of the graveyard — above the spring that babbles by yonder oak. How? by a thousand looks and words, that you, as well as I, remember.

Alice. I never said I loved you.

Ver. You swore it with your eyes — you sealed it with your lips.

Alice. Fie, Vernon; when you begin a flirtation, reproach not the weak heart that indulged you. Do your duty, as I am doing mine.

Ver. I have but one remaining duty, and before that sun sets, it shall be done. Good morning, Miss Hawthorne; I shall not fail to do my duty. (*VERNON going off, L. H.*)

Lord. (*Advancing.*) Bravo, Vernon!

Ver. (*Returns.*) George Lordly, you have won. Your manhood and gold against my poverty and youth. You have won a battle, but take care lest you lose a heart — a brother's heart at that.

Lord. Pshaw, Vernon, I am used to losing hearts. I once even went so far as to lose my own — but it was picked up and sent back a little bruised and broken. Don't threaten *me* with the loss of a heart — a human heart. Why, brother, I should miss it less than a sparrow from yonder tree top. Titus fretting over his lost day was less contemptible than a man of my age fretting over a lost heart. Come, let us gather flowers for Mary's birthday. Good morning, Mr. Hawthorne. Adieu, Miss Alice. Come, Vernon.

*Ver.* (*Aside.*) The infernal cynic. Miss Hawthorne, I shall not fail to do my duty. (*Exeunt LORDLY and VERNON, L. H. 1 E.*)

*Haw.* (*Down R. H.*) Have you told him to forget you?

*Alice.* (*In tears on L. H.*) More than that; I have taught him to despise me.

*Haw.* And if he should despise you? Look up, my child. Yonder bounds the sun above the hills, as if the Grand Master himself had come to watch his world a while, and sent his sentinel stars to sleep. Tears like the rain are followed by the sunshine. The hand of the Great Consoler is sure to paint his promised rainbow on the clouds, a sign for the deluge to cease. (*Exeunt HAWTHORNE and ALICE, R. H. 1 E.*)

*Adam.* She went that way — the gold hair — the blue eyes — they went that way. The must come that way!

*Enter BEALE and JANE, L. H. 2 E.*

*Beale.* It's well you came no sooner, Jane Jones. 'All creation's been 'ere.

*Jane.* This Grotto's a great place. If Mr. Lordly's in a fit of the glooms, he's sure to wander to the Grotto — if Mr. Vernon has a meeting with Miss Alice, it's always the Grotto — if you have any thing special for me, it's "Jane, I hexpect you at the Grotto." And now, having met you at the Grotto, pray, sir, what next.

*Adam.* It seems a long night since yesterday. She will be weary when she comes that way!

*Beale.* Dry up, you hold Guy.

*Jane.* Beale, is the old fellow always here?

*Beale.* Day in and day out — rain or shine — winter and summer — halways 'ere, these twelve years past.

*Jane.* And this daughter of his that he keeps expecting — this mysterious blue eyes and gold hair, that is eternally coming this way, and yet never comes? There's something terrible about her, and you know you promised, Beale, you know you promised?

*Beale.* My lips are sealed.

*Jane.* A man's lips are never sealed so tight that a kiss can't melt them. (*Kisses him.*)

*Beale.* I'm thawing fast!

*Jane.* How did she happen to drive him mad? eh, Beale?

*Beale.* Jane Jones, you are hirresistible. The 'istory of that 'ere old cove and his daughter is a romance — it ought to be put in a book — one of those yellow-covered books. It ought to form a part of hevery chambermaid's library.

*Jane.* Out with it, Beale, or I'll expire.

*Beale.* It's full of 'orrors.

*Jane.* Pile 'em on. I'm devoted to 'orrors. There's nothing so fascinating as a good dose of 'orrors.

*Adam.* Helen! Helen! must I wait so long?

*Beale.* That was her name — 'Elen.

*Jane.* I've often wished my name was Helen. Was she pretty?

*Beale.* Hastonishingly 'andsome for a Hamerican. A real Henglish beauty. All the neighbor'ood was in love with 'er — 'er



father hadored 'er — two gentlemen haddressed 'er, and both succeeded.

*Jane.* Both succeeded?

*Beale.* Both succeeded.

*Jane.* Beale —

*Beale.* Yes; one succeeded in getting her for his wife, the other for his mistress.

*Jane.* The infamous creature!

*Beale.* Heloped with 'er 'usband's bosom friend. O woman, woman! And now for the 'orrid part — guess what the hinjured 'usband did.

*Jane.* Bought a revolver — telegraphed the police — took the next train — overtook them in the next town — massacred them both in each other's arms!

*Beale.* No, no. He took the foolish, old-fashioned way. Challenged the sejucer, and got a ball in his leg.

*Jane.* Served him right, the ninny. It's a wonder the lead didn't find its way to his head.

*Beale.* O woman, woman! The day before she left, 'er 'usband — I lived 'ere with old Mr. Lordly then — young Mr. Lordly didn't live 'ere then — it was a morning like this, only a spring morning — I met 'er going to her father's, with a basket of berries. I noticed the tears in 'er heyes as she walked along — but she was all hover smiles when we reached old Hadam's cottage. She played around him like a kitten — twisting his gray hair with 'er hown, and snipped off one long lock with a pair of scissors —

*Adam.* Come, child, come. I have brought you a crown of red roses. Quick, they are fading — fading so fast! (*Raising the flowers.*)

*Beale.* Yes, there's the roses in his hand — fresh every day. Look, 'e's making believe to crown 'er.

*Jane.* I'd give a month's wages for a chance to choke that woman!

*Beale.* O woman, woman! There he stood on that very morning and blessed 'er — she knelt as he blessed 'er — and somehow the tears come into my heyes, too — though I never suspicioned 'er wunce — it was so solemn like. And then she rose all laughing again, singing an old song, and took that path, (*pointing* v. E. R. H.,) looking back over her shoulder, so, and kissing a good by to him with her 'and.

*Jane.* Beale, you'll kill me — my apron's done for already.

*Beale.* It was good by for hever — good by for heternity! Then came the duel — the story went every where, and of course, old Hadam 'ad to 'ear it too. But no one ever knew 'ow 'ard the old man took it; he was so quiet and steady like — until one morning we found 'im 'ere with these roses in his 'and, and 'ere 'e 'as been hever since. Ain't that 'orrid enough?

*Jane.* Last week's Ledger beats it hollow. But, I say, Beale, if fathers' heads all turned with their daughters' heels —

*Beale.* Well, Jane Jones?

*Jane.* Madmen would be dreadfully in the majority. Now for the names. Who was the "hinjured 'usband," and who the vile "sejucer." (*BEALE shakes his head.*) Don't shake your head.

*Beale.* I don't want a bullet through it. So mum's the word. Kiss away. You might as well attempt to thaw a hieberg.

*Jane.* Beale?

*Beale.* I've a himportant communication to himpart to you, and as it's near breakfast time, I must stop your hentreaties and proceed to business.

*Jane.* (*Twirling her apron.*) I must really go and look up my gentle Stillworth.

*Beale.* Your gentle Stillworth will keep. Stay. Mr. Lordly contemplates a visit to Heurope in general, and Hengland—my native Hengland—in particular.

*Jane.* Does he take you with him?

*Beale.* Jane Jones, I have been at some pains, as you know, to make Mr. Lordly a gentleman,—he will pass now in Hamerica, but I can't trust 'im to travel alone in Heurope yet; of course, *I* go. I've lost all 'opes of Hamerica.

*Jane.* Well, Mr. Impudence, you wish me to pack your trunk, I guess.

*Beale.* (*Caressingly.*) No, Jane; not exactly *my* trunk, but *our* trunk—*our* trunk. For mark my prophecy—the same ship that takes George Lordly abroad, takes your gentle Stillworth too. So, Jane Jones, let it be *our* trunk.

*Enter HARLEY, in black, feeble and haggard, and HELEN, 2 E. R. H.*

*Jane.* Quit it, Beale; somebody's watching us.

*Har.* (*Aside to HELEN.*) Lordly's man-servant. But he can't recognize me—I'm too much changed for that. We can learn all from him.

*Beale.* 'Gad, I wonder who dug 'im up.

*Jane.* Keep him off, Beale; he's a ghost or a vampire—one of those blood-suckers we saw at the theatre—that walked *so*—and held his head *so*—and waved his hand *so*—(*imitating.*) Fend him off.

*Har.* (*Coming down.*) Could you show me the way, my good friend, to the old sexton's cottage. I am told it is near Mr. Lordly's. This is Domewood, I believe? I am just arrived from Italy, after a long absence. Many scenes that were once very familiar seem new and strange.

*Jane.* Hear his voice, Beale. He's just out of a sepulchre.

*Beale.* You'll find the path between those two sycamores—it's a little hovergrown just now, but you can make it out. Turn to the left at that clump of laurel, and you're there in five minutes. You can't miss it—Huncle Adam walks it twice a day.

*Har.* (*R. c.*) Is he living, then?

*Beale.* (*L. c.*) I said 'e walked.

*Har.* The dead walk too at times. Is he well?

*Beale.* Not a pain or a hache in his body.

*Helen.* (*Aside, R. H.*) Thank God!

*Beale.* But his mind! Poor hold soul, sir,—when his daughter ran off with his honor, the devil ran off with his wits. He's mad.

*Helen.* (*Advancing rapidly to BEALE.*) Mad!

*Beale.* Mad these twelve years. There he stands hexpecting his daughter — waiting to crown her. He thinks they parted yesterday. Do you see the fresh roses in his 'and? Mr. Lordly sends them to him from our 'ot 'ouse twice a day.

*Helen.* Mad! Mad for me! Waiting for me! Where?

*Adam.* (*Up c.*) The golden hair — the blue eyes — they went that way, they will come that way. Helen! Helen! your crown is fading! (*She springs forward to c., but totters back into HARLEY'S arms.*)

*Har.* We have drained the chalice to the dregs.

*Jane.* Run for a doctor, Beale.

*Har.* (*To BEALE.*) Stir not, on your life! The best physician will soon be here.

*Helen.* (*Reviving.*) Untie this hood — fling back my hair — he will know me still. Lead me to those laurels. Ah, we knew them once too well. What was the song I sung?

*Har.* She raves.

*Helen.* Let me stand alone. He will know me. I have strength to reach my father's feet. I have prayed all these years that I might die there.

*Adam.* She went that way — the gold hair — the blue eyes. As sure as the sun shineth, they will come that way.

*Helen.* (*Advances towards ADAM — bareheaded — her hair loose — singing.*)

“ *The ladye stepped within the hall,  
Ay, and she said, on bended knee,  
'O, give me back my troth again,  
And I'll go home to my countrie.' ”*

*Adam.* (*As she sings.*) Coming at last. I hear her step — but O, how weary! She must have wandered far. I knew she would come that way. She is singing her song. Helen! Helen! come for your crown. One rose is living yet. Bend your head. (*She kneels — he stoops to crown her.*) What? Her hair was gold, and yours is gray — her eyes were blue, and yours are bleared — her cheeks were flame, and yours are frost. Where did you steal her smile? — that smile is hers. I will kiss you for that smile.

*Helen.* Father!

*Adam.* It seems to me — ah me! — there is such a whirling here. Come, darling, I have kept the berries till you came. Let your head hang there — closer. See how soon she falls asleep. She has walked too far. How she has changed since morning — since yesterday — since — Ah, the mist is still here — mist, mist, mist! — Take your rose wreath, dear. Don't touch her, sir, (*to HARLEY*;) you will wake her — and her dreams are sweet — you see she's smiling.

*Har.* (*To BEALE and JANE.*) Kneel! Do you not see that there's an angel near us — the angel of death.

*Adam.* Sh! Let her sleep on — she's used to sleeping here. Death? No, no — her heart is beating — her lips are breathing — she is whispering to me now. What? what? The light streams in

— the mist is melting. Forgive you? Wait, wait — wait a while — it is all so sudden. (*HELEN revives and supports him as he sinks back.*) I told you she was sleeping — see how she wakes. (*He sinks slowly back, supported by HELEN and HARLEY.*)

## TABLEAU.

	ADAM.	BEALE.	
	HARLEY.	HELEN.	JANE.
R. H.			L. H.

END OF ACT I.

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## ACT II.

SCENE I. — *Library at Domewood, 3 and 4 G.; D. F. L. H. practical; carpet down; Gothic round table on R. H.; on it inkstand, quills, pens, portfolio of paper, check book, sealing wax, and written poetry; Gothic arm chair L. of table, R. H.; sofa on L. H. C.; small table, with wine, &c., on 2 G. L. H.; table on 3 E. R. H., with books, cigar box, and cigars.*

JANE discovered dusting the furniture. Enter BEALE, 1 E. L. H.

Jane. Are you just from the cottage?

Beale. (L. H.) Just.

Jane. (R. H.) What news?

Beale. They're hall a-livin' yet — hall a livin'.

Jane. What new horrors, Beale? What makes you shake and shiver so?

Beale. Ham I a-shakin' hand a-shiverin'?

Jane. You look scared to death.

Beale. No, Jane Jones — not scared — a Henglishman's never scared.

Jane. Hexcept in Hamerica, Beale. But you do look awfully scared.

Beale. Not scared, Jane Jones — only himpressed.

Jane. And what himpressed you, Beale?

Beale. (*Frightened.*) Why, you know, Jane Jones, I 'elped to lift the old man to the cottage.

Jane. Did he come to?

Beale. Came to — moaning and mumbling like. And when he 'ad come to, says 'e to me —

Jane. He? who? The old one or the wampire?

Beale. The wampire. Says 'e to me, "Breathe one syllable about what you 'ave 'eard or seen to George Lordly or hany body helse, and" — and — O Jane Jones!

Jane. And what? Don't be quite so deeply himpressed, Beale.

Beale. He pintoed a pistol to my 'art, hexclaiming, "You know me?" I do know 'im, he's a dead shot.

*Jane.* La, Beale, it would take twenty pistols to stop *my* tongue. Just think, another duel; the wampire shot through the heart — exciting trial — immense speeches — triumphant and unanimous, and instantaneous acquittal, and final reconciliation.

*Beale.* Woman, beware! Blab, and I'll bolt!

*Jane.* O Beale.

*Beale.* I'll desert you forever — leave you a defenceless victim — leave you a —

*Jane.* You have conquered — I submit.

*Enter MARY, 1 E. R. H., with a bunch of flowers, and case of jewels, which she places on table, R. H.*

*Beale.* Remember, mum! It will all leak out in good time. Remember, mum!

*Jane.* Mum! (*Exit BEALE, 1 E. L. H.*) I wish you a very happy birthday, Miss Mary, and many happy returns.

*Mary.* Thank you, Jane. But what makes you sigh so?

*Jane.* Have you ever witnessed a romance in real life?

*Mary.* There is no romance worth naming out of real life.

*Jane.* But a real thrilling climax? O, dear, O, dear!

*Mary.* You seem to suffer.

*Jane.* I do; suffer — suffer as only woman can suffer, — suffer with an imprisoned secret. O, my dear mistress if I might but tell you — there's a romance going on around us; we're right in the midst of it.

*Mary.* Don't, Jane, — there's nothing I dislike half so much as an exposed secret. You may leave me. (*Retires up R. H., to table R. H., and sits.*)

*Jane.* (*Aside.*) Wait till I'm braiding her hair to-night. I'll make her hear me then, with all her grand airs. I call that woman nothing more nor less than a magnificent fool. (*Exit JANE, L. H. 1 E.*)

*Mary.* These flowers and trinkets are from him. Must Lordly's beautiful affection pursue me forever, disdaining all return? They say that each soul has an angel at its side, whose arched wings shield us in our exile; and often have I longed to requite their celestial service. But far beyond the reach of human love speeds the veiled spirit on its mission of mercy, ever near us, but never ours. (*Goes up, sits at table R. H.*)

*Enter LORDLY, R. H. 1 E.*

*Lord.* Day after day must I stand by with folded arms, and see her thus slowly withering beneath Vernon's undisguised indifference? Is it ever thus? Must the nightingale ever lean her breast against the thorn? (*MARY advances on L. H.*) Can't you get up a brighter face for your birthday? I wrote you some verses last night — here they are — at least the pieces. (*Scattering the fragments.*)

*Mary.* I will pay you back for that.

*Lord.* Come, be gayer — this is no day for sadness.

*Mary.* Sadness is often peace. But if you wish it I shall be gay. Shall I romp, dance, sing — are you not tired of those old baby tricks? — would you always have me a mere simpering plaything?

*Lord.* Scarcely. But I should like to restore the fire to your eye — the rose to your cheek — the coral to your lips — I should like —

*Mary.* To have a wax doll of me? All the flowers must fade; fret not that my turn comes early in the season.

*Lord.* Your dead father was my friend and protector, and when he left you to my care, he little imagined that my guardianship would prove a curse.

*Mary.* A curse?

*Lord.* Exactly. You have no society, no amusement. We are ten miles from town, and not two visitors a year. You know why — you can explain this miracle. Ah, no blushing — no denial. You have heard it — all the world has heard it — the newspapers lived on it for a week — I can see the huge capitals now on the ceiling — on the wall — on the very trees — the trees I planted. There they are, the living, burning letters — “*Astounding Disclosures — Heavy Defalcation — George Lordly a Bank Robber!*” I have lived twelve years since then — lived *here* — here in the very centre of my shame — but *here* I live no longer. There is one safe refuge for all American defaulters — Europe. When I am once out of the way, the world will come and cure your sadness.

*Mary.* The world will come, will it, and *you* away?

*Lord.* When I am cut down, the sunshine will reach you. I must quit this house which I darken, this neighborhood which I infect. I wait but for one event — your union with Vernon. In mercy, in justice to me, name the day.

*Mary.* Unsolicited by Vernon? The man who expects a woman's highest gift, should reserve the privilege to sue in person.

*Enter VERNON. L. H. 1 E.*

*Lord.* He is here. This match-making's a very heart-breaking business — that's why women like it, I suppose.

*(Exit LORDLY, 1 E. R. H.)*

*Mary.* See what charming flowers your brother gave me.

*Ver.* And I, alas! have none to bestow. The roses in the hot-house are his, and the flowers of the field have long since faded. Those ornaments too — I recognize his princely touch. I come, without an offering, to greet your birthday.

*Mary.* What more do I wish than your hand and smile? Let us group these buds before they wilt. (*MARY sits on sofa, L. C. VERNON sits on stool on her R. H.*)

*Ver.* Mary — it is two years since we promised to love each other — for life. I think we loved each other then.

*Mary.* What a finely tinted camellia!

*Ver.* I think this pure white one prettier. There has latterly been some undefined restraint between us, which ought to be removed. If I have given you any cause —

*Mary.* I will keep this sprig of mignonette for Alice Hawthorne.

*Ver.* Accompany it with this evergreen — let the little darling have a touch of constancy. I have been thinking, Mary, that to-day might be made a double feast — that your wedding day — don't crush that violet! — could not be better celebrated than on your birthday.

*Mary.* And I have been thinking, Vernon, that we were both much younger when that scene in the garden occurred — and that you may have regretted the momentary impulse that then made you speak. You evidently take very little pleasure in my company, and, indeed, *since Miss Hawthorne's return*, — you are picking that rose to pieces! — you have even avoided me. Were I disposed to be jealous —

*Ver.* And were I disposed to be jealous, I might wonder what fascination you find in *my brother's library*. (*MARY drops geranium.*) Allow me — you dropped this geranium. Whatever my devotion to Alice has been, it is over — I promise to bury her name beneath the altar that unites us.

*Mary.* Has she stung you, Vernon? Has she driven you from her side, that you fly to me for comfort? Your cheek is flushed — your eye is flashing. Beware how you urge, in a momentary pique, a step, that once taken, is irrevocable.

*Ver.* I am sick of these "beware's." (*Rises.*) It seems to be my brother's peculiar function to mutter "beware! beware!" wherever I go, or whatever I do, and you have learned to echo him. I am not a child, to be scared by a raven's croaking. Yet even he would change his note for once, and sing — "Marry, Marry!" And know, Mary Stillworth, that it is to-day or never!

*Mary.* *Never!* let it be then. (*Rises.*) By what right dare you propose to-day or never? Suppose I should prefer to-morrow or next day, or a week hence. Suppose I should like a new gown, or a new head-dress. Suppose I should like a month to test our reconciliation? Would not your sublime majesty accord me one of those feminine prerogatives?

*Ver.* Name any day, then — make it certain, if not present.

*Mary.* (*Laying her hand on his shoulder.*) Vernon — my friend — my brother — let us put this quarrel from our path. Take your gun and bring me back a brace of quails — *they* are yours, since you say the flowers are not; and come to me, when your wounds, whatever they may be, are not quite so fresh — when there is less venom on your lips — less gall in your heart; we will talk this matter calmly over.

*Ver.* Mary, you are an angel — and I, a poor devil, who only knows his own wretchedness, and how little he deserves you. I will shoot you the birds, (*crosses L. H.;*) but, while I am away, ask your true heart to answer, from that inmost cell, too deep, too dark for human searching, whether, in my love of Alice Hawthorne — for I did love her! — you or I am most to blame!

(*Exit VERNON, L. H. 1 E.*)

*Mary.* Has he guessed my secret? It cannot be! I have guarded it as a priceless treasure — veiled it as a burning sin. Do I carry the confession in my eyes — is it written on my bosom? — branded on my forehead? He cannot see it! He would worship me if he knew how well I love.

*Enter BEALE with letter, L. H. 1 E.*

*Beale.* Many 'appy returns, Miss Mary.

*Mary.* Why, Beale, are you ill? You seem to have the ague.

*Beale.* I ham hovercome.

*Mary.* By what?

*Beale.* Hovercome by a crisis — a crisis in the 'istory of this 'ouse. Something's 'appened, Miss Stillworth. I'll be shot if I do tell what's 'appened, and I begin to be hafraid I'll be shot if I don't. Shot if I do, by the wampire — shot if I don't, by the 'usband.

*Mary.* Are you mad, or drunk? Is that letter for me?

*Beale.* From Parson 'Awthorne's.

*Mary.* (*Opening the letter.*) My old friend's birthday benediction. (*Reading.*) "My child: You were but eight years old when your father died, too young to comprehend a communication he wished to make to you. I attended him in his last moments, and, on his death-bed, he gave me the enclosed letter to keep, as a gift for your twentieth birthday."

*Beale.* (*Aside.*) I think somebody helse 'as the hager now.

*Mary.* A letter from my father, reserved till now! (*Opening it.*)

*Beale.* More 'orrors, as Jane says. More 'orrors! 'Orrors halways flies in squads. (*She continues to read.*) If she would honly 'ear me, she'd put me on the right track about this wampire business — she's halways right. But I'll never get a chance — I'll never get a chance to make 'er 'ear me. (*As she finishes the letter, her head falls on her arm.*) Now, hinstead of hadvising me, she's contemplating a faint — Hamerican women 'ave a faculty for fainting. Jane Jones is splendid at it. (*Kneeling beside her.*)

*Enter JANE, D. F. L. H.*

Would your ladyship listen? (*Aside.*) — Republicans like titles. — Would your 'ighness condescend — (*Aside.*) — Gad, if 'ighness won't rouse 'er, she's either dead, or no Hamerican.

*Jane.* The presumptuous villain! making love to her, and she's a listenin' too. I'll scratch her eyes out — I'll —

*Mary.* (*Lifting her head.*) Beale, say to Mr. Lordly that I should be glad to see him here.

*Jane.* (*Aside to BEALE.*) So you were making love to your mistress — were you?

*Beale.* Well, hain't this a free country? Hain't one man as good as hanother? Can't Henglish calves look up when Hirish whips is in demand? I've discovered mistress's malady, Jane, — she's in love with me.

*Jane.* She's fool enough even for that.

*Beale.* Do you see that letter in 'er 'and? It's full of 'orrors.

*Jane.* More 'orrors, Beale? Pile 'em on, pile 'em on.

(*Exeunt BEALE and JANE, R. H. 1 E.*)

*Mary.* How the heroes of the sword, the crested leaders of the nation, — how the heroes of the pen, the laurelled leaders of the mind, — are dwarfed by their uncrowned, unloved brother — the hero of the hearth!



(Enter LORDLY, R. H. 1 E., who watches her intently.)

Lord. (*Aside.*) Still grieving? The wedding day not yet named? The scamp must have hung fire again. (*Sitting beside her on sofa, L. c.*) You two have been making sad work of my flowers. — You must have had quite an interesting interview. I hope this botanical barbarism led to some redeeming result. Come, tell me all; think aloud. I am sure you are thinking of Vernon now.

Mary. (*Passionately, and rising.*) I — thinking of Vernon? Thinking of Vernon now?

Lord. (*Rising.*) What has happened? You are pale as a ghost.

Mary. I have heard a voice from the grave.

Lord. What has shaken you so terribly?

Mary. (*Controlling herself.*) There was nothing terrible in this voice from the grave, this music from the other world; it is but a sweet, strange story.

Lord. You have been dreaming.

Mary. Then interpret the dream. (*They sit again on sofa, L. c.*) There was once a man who held an office of trust, who lived beyond his means, who gambled in the vain hope of retrieving his fortunes, who once, in a moment of despair and want, defrauded the bank over which he presided.

Lord. (*Aside, communingly.*) Has Hawthorne betrayed the whispered trust of dying penitence? (*Laughing.*) — Well, girl, it needs no ghost from the grave to tell us that. Bank robbery is no miracle.

Mary. The miraculous part has yet to come. Hear me on. The president was the true criminal, but the clerk, who had been the dupe, was the only victim — the victim by his own free choice and act. It needed but his own word to clear him — that word was never spoken. It needed even all his intellect to conceal his innocence, and he tasked his ingenuity to prove his guilt. Innocent, unasked, unbought, silencing the confession of the contrite thief with a reckless laugh that seemed ambitious of disgrace, he stepped between the culprit and his doom, and sacrificed his own honor to save his friend's. (*Rising as he rises, and sinking slowly to her knee.*) The president of that bank was my father — the clerk who saved him was you, George Lordly.

Lord. Has Hawthorne told you this? No other mortal knew it.

Mary. Did I not say it was a voice from the grave? (*Showing the letter.*) Do you know the hand? My father's — his dying legacy — a sealed gift for my twentieth birthday. It was left with Mr. Hawthorne; he feared to trust it to you.

Lord. (*Grasping the letter.*) Well he might, or long since it had perished thus. (*Violently tearing it.*) Swear before you rise never to breathe, hint, speak, look one syllable of this.

Mary. I will speak it trumpet-tongued throughout the universe.

Lord. And much the universe would be edified at the spectacle of a daughter carving a curse on her father's spotless tombstone.

Mary. Your part is played; mine now begins.

Lord. What part have you in a friendship that began before your

life? By what authority do you threaten to rob me of the solitary beauty of my life?

*Mary.* O, let me speak; let me shout aloud your beautiful friendship; let me wash the stain from your name, that men may know you, love you, worship you. Bury not this secret in one woman's heart; it is too great for one poor heart to carry.

*Lord.* Pshaw! There lies the only proof of my innocence, and even at that the world would sneer as a shallow fabrication of mine. I am used to being thought dishonest, but I should not relish the additional sensation of being considered absurd. One syllable — one whisper of aught of this to mortal man and so help me Heaven, this is our last meeting. You have called me kind — I can be thrice as cruel.

*Mary.* (*Rises.*) You have conquered.

*Lord.* I would rather be dead at your feet than have you know this. But since you do know it, pray let me show you that I am not quite the hero and martyr, and your generous father (God bless him) not quite the scamp, you seem to think us.

*Mary.* (*Walking forward.*) Of course you were a fool to do what you did; any other booby would have done the same. Go on. I am sure you will contrive, in less than five minutes, to prove yourself either a simpleton or a scoundrel.

*Lord.* (*Following her.*) Say a simpleton. It is milder. You have heard that I was once married; *have you also heard (very earnestly and inquiringly) — (aside)* the scandal was too stale to reach her. — Have you also heard —

*Mary.* (*Still indignantly.*) How you killed your wife?

*Lord.* No; how my wife killed me. At home for the vacation, and necessarily enamoured of the nearest object, I was simpleton enough to fall in love with our gardener's pretty daughter.

*Mary.* Whom you poisoned by putting prussic acid in her roses.

*Lord.* Whom I married on the spot. Poor Helen! Calico and corn, instead of the velvet and wheat I had promised her. But such a pet as I had been, how could I expect to be disinherited? An idler at college, a baby in the world, disinheritance meant starvation. Poor Helen! our lot was a hard one, and she — grew weary of it.

*Mary.* Weary, and with you?

*Lord.* So weary that — I have been limping from this ball in my knee ever since. Mary Stillworth, when I was wounded, disowned, dishonored — when my wife's hands were busy with her bleeding paramour — your *father* was *my* only nurse; and when I rose, he gave me employment and a home. Need I say more? I was childless; he had you. I lonely and laughed at; he loved and honored. O, girl, could you but know the strange, wild, *man's* joy with which I watched the old name of cuckold disappearing beneath the new brand of defaulter! It was like a dukedom on a battle field. Nor was this all. On his dying bed, your father sent for mine, told him my innocence, told it as only his noble lips could tell it, told it so as to restore me to the sole inheritance of this princely estate. But, Mary, I imposed silence on my gray-haired sire; think not I can suffer your young lips to rob me of this sacred tribute to the dead.

Mary. (*After a pause.*) Is she living?

Lord. She? Who? *Madame?* Living? Could she live away from me? Well, the wedding day — is it fixed? Come, I am crazy to start for Europe.

Mary. To escape being stung to madness here by calumnies which I might change, with one word, to worship.

Lord. And did you really believe that I, who have lived down a lie which looked like truth, I who have outlived the few that ever loved me — that I was afraid of being still cut by Mrs. Noodle, and still unrecognized by Mr. Poodle? Why, the world has grown more charitable; society seems to have some divine aspiration to suffer between thieves; the difficulty now is to find a man that hasn't robbed a bank. Pshaw, Mary; why, even when I fretted most, it was far less owing to public scorn than to the *friendly* derision which my unconcealed indifference to public opinion universally excited; for I soon found that friendship, whose essence is equality, never forgives superiority. There, I've made my boast. Name the day when I shall be free to wander.

Mary. Why name it now, when you have disclaimed the only temptation?

Lord. There is another reason.

Mary. What reason can part us now?

Lord. Some of these days you shall know. When you and Vernon are wedded, when I return from my wanderings a venerable pilgrim, and ask to share your cup of peace — why, then, some summer's evening, when the whip-poor-will sings on the hillside, and I sit beneath those talking oaks with your children on my knees, you may hear my only remaining secret, — but not now, pet — not now.

Mary. You have caught my pallor — your hand is trembling.

Lord. I have sudden spells of feebleness that quite unman me. Mary Stillworth, could you know what my dreams are, night by night, here — in that very chair — you would not venture to stand thus with your white hand fast in mine. (*Breaking from her.*) I am but a weak, dreaming babe — a fool that loathes, yet loves, his folly. But since I have become a hero in your eyes, I shall strive to play a hero's part. Vernon has been here —

Mary. He loves Alice Hawthorne. If you would insure his happiness, let him marry her.

Lord. He does not love her; it was but a passing inclination, provoked by doubt of your affection.

Mary. Can there be a doubt of *my* affection? *This misunderstanding must end; it is killing me.* (*Cross to R. H. She covers her face with her hands.*)

Lord. (*Passionately.*) To day shall end it! If you believe that I have the right to demand a favor, grant the one I now ask.

Mary. You cannot name the deed I will not do.

Lord. (*Taking her hand.*) Marry Vernon.

Mary. (*Staggering.*) When?

Lord. At sunset this evening.

Mary. You have asked it. Be it so. At sunset this evening.

(*Exit MARY, 1 E. R. H., her eyes fixed on LORDLY.*)

*Lord.* What could it mean — that long, deep, upbraiding gaze? Unloved in my youth by the meanest, dare I hope it now from the noblest? Yet her words were too plain — 'this misunderstanding is killing me.' Her bounding step, and this shattered knee? the brown splendor of her hair, and this grizzled brow! Never, even were I free. It is a dream, a phantom. Away with it!

*Enter VERNON, L. H. 1 E., with gun, in field dress, dragging BEALE by the ear, whose cries are heard from without.*

*Beale.* Do'-do'-don't 'urt me, sir. I tried my best, but I couldn't help telling — hindeed, I couldn't, sir.

*Lord.* Don't waste a shot, Vernon — what's the row?

*Ver. (Releasing him.)* Now speak, you infernal rascal; speak out, or by the blood of Nimrod I'll wing you. He's been after me with a cock and bull story about you and Uncle Adam, and a woman, and a wampire. Speak, you bloody British booby; speak, or I'll give you a dose of American lead.

*Beale. (To LORDLY.)* They're back — they're back, sir!

*Lord.* Who are back?

*Beale. (Stammering.)* 'Er and 'im, sir — 'Elen and 'Arley, sir — the wictim and the wampire, sir!

*Ver.* Stop your gibberish. What does he mean, George?

*Lord. (Motioning BEALE to go.)* Return in ten minutes. And, Beale, (*crosses to c., aside to BEALE,*) I keep my pistols loaded — keep your mouth shut till I see you.

*Beale.* Ye-e-e-yes, sir.

(*Exit BEALE, L. H. 1 E.*)

*Lord.* The scoundrel cannot get drunk without having a vision of my runaway wife. I suppose you have heard of her?

*Ver.* Yes, and heard of her death abroad after you killed her paramour.

*Lord.* Killed her paramour? Gad, he came nearer killing me. My second thought it all up with me.

*Ver.* Second? Did you risk your life against a villain's, who deserved to be shot down like a dog?

*Lord.* I had some such heroic idea, of course, of shooting him down like a dog. But Edwin Harley and I were old playmates; and somehow the image of the fair-haired boy I had loved in the old college days got between me and the bearded man who wronged me. It was twelve years ago, too, when I might contrive to pass for an honorable man *without* shooting him down like a dog. Besides, brother, I wanted a bullet through my own heart more than through his; for at such a moment a fond coward like me finds death sweeter than revenge. It's not exactly the most gallant thing in the world, this shooting a man down like a dog. But one thing at a time. Could you love Mary Stillworth?

*Ver.* I could reverence, at least — bow like Endymion in his brightening cave before the descending moon. That's *her* style, isn't it? (*Loading his gun.*) But you have taken this match on your own shoulders; settle it your own way. Any thing will suit me; but the sooner the better.

*Lord.* Are you loading that gun to blow my brains out? You look as if you had some such thought, and I am not at all disposed to balk your pious intentions.

*Ver.* (*Wadding the shot.*) My shot is too small for such large game. Take your eyes off my heart, brother, or dive deep. You will find some drops of your own true blood at bottom.

*Lord.* (*Taking his hand.*) Vernon Lordly, Mary Stillworth is to me the most precious charge on earth. Answer on your honor — may I trust her to your keeping?

*Ver.* George, as there is a heaven above us, I believe that Mary Stillworth at this very moment loves *you*, not me.

*Lord.* (*Whispering.*) Loves me — loves ME? Those words should fall like the light of a new-born star — soft as the dewdrop's whisper of the skies to the dreaming flowers.

*Ver.* She loves you. (*Replacing the rod.*)

*Lord.* Loves *me*? Why, in my morn of life I strove for woman's love, and failed. You know not how I toiled to win my poor little fugitive's simple heart. In prosperity, I loaded her with gold and gems; in adversity, I poured the treasures of my mind at her feet. Our mother tongue was too narrow for my broad homage. I ransacked the languages, explored the centuries, for names of endearment.

*Ver.* (*Lifting the hammer.*) That's no way to win a woman.

*Lord.* All in vain. And yet you talk of Mary Stillworth loving me — *me*, a gray, forsaken defaulter! You are madder than Beale.

*Ver.* (*Capping.*) I believe you love her too.

*Lord.* A truce to this nonsense. She told me not an hour ago that her misunderstanding with you was killing her.

*Ver.* Her eyes have told another story.

*Lord.* Believe her lips; no falsehood ever sat there.

*Ver.* There must be some mistake.

*Lord.* None. Question her no more, or you will slay her at the foot of the altar. She has named the day and hour.

*Ver.* Good. When?

*Lord.* Sunset this evening.

*Ver.* Capital. Dinner afterwards. I have just time to bag a dozen quails for the grand event. I say, George, you'll have to lend me your old swallow tail, for I ripped my new Hilberg last night, trying a double carrom at the club. Don't have much company. I'll be back in time. (*Whistling for his dog.*) Here, Don! here, boy!

(*Exit, whistling, 1 E. L. H.*)

*Lord.* A horsewhip would improve that youngster. I wish I were his father instead of his brother. I've half a mind — but to break off now would break her heart. A wedding's always one note, at least, above a funeral. A woman would rather die *of* a brute than die *for* one. (*Sits on the sofa, L. C.*)

*Enter JANE JONES, L. H. 1 E.*

*Jane.* O sir, something dreadful's happened to Beale. I can't get a word out of him, do what I will. He goes about with his mouth shut and his chin up — so. I'm sure he has the lockjaw.

*Lord.* (*Aside.*) He always has when I name my pistols. — Jane, is there any case on record of a *woman's* having the lockjaw? Send Beale here; I'll cure him. And mind you, Jane, the lockjaw is an infirmity for which I have a great respect — especially in servants.

*Enter BEALE, H. L. 1 E.*

Ah, here's our invalid now. You can leave us, Jane.

*Jane.* Can't I hold his head, while you operate on him, sir? I am good at holding heads, sir.

*Lord.* I have no doubt of it. Most of you are. Go!

*Jane.* Well, I'm going. — (*Aside.*) Poor Beale!

*Lord.* Go!

*Jane.* Well, ain't I gone? (*Exit JANE, L. H. 1 E.*)

*Lord.* (*Sitting on sofa, L. C.*) Compose yourself, Beale. Sit down. Look a little less ghastly. Smile — can't you? That's something like it; try again. Heavens, man, do you call that a smile? Open your mouth; I won't shoot you. You were saying something about — about Helen and Harley — about their being back.

*Beale.* (*Stammering.*) Ye-e-e-yes, sir. Me and Jane, sir, as we was standing a talking, a talking by the Grotto this morning, and Huncle Hadam a standing there too, and leaning on his spade, and calling, and calling —

*Lord.* (*Filling a glass with brandy.*) Less emotion, Beale. Your nerves want bracing. Empty that — don't be afraid; it won't hurt you — down with it all. That's it. Can you smile now? Bravo! Now for our story — come. Uncle Adam was leaning on his spade, and calling — come, Beale, — calling what?

*Beale.* Calling for his daughter to come, and she *came*, and 'Arley with her. They came like two ghosts — hawfully pale — hawfully changed; but I knew 'em, and the hold cove seemed to know 'em too. O, what a scene it was, sir! you should 'ave been there. First she fell in 'is harms, then 'e fell in 'er harms; first she fainted, then 'e fainted; first she came to — then 'e went off like, and she and 'Arley and I 'ad to take 'im 'ome, where they hall hare now. 'Arley swore 'e'd blow my brains out hif I blowed 'im before 'e was ready to see you, (*feeling the liquor, but not drunk;*) but, bless you, sir, 'e's too weak to pull a trigger — a real living skeleton; and you know, sir, that I'm the last man halive to be hafeard of a pistol. (*Rising.*)

*Lord.* (*Rising.*) Yes, you are hard to scare, Beale. I thought they were in Europe or in — heaven!

*Beale.* He said they 'ad just harried from Hitaly.

*Lord.* Was the lady very feeble?

*Beale.* Sick as death — frail as a hangel — spirituuous in the hex-treme.

*Lord.* Seasick, most likely. Beale, we must fatten Harley up, for I foresee that I shall have to fight him again, and fighting a skeleton's not the thing. Cram a basket with wines and meats, and send it to Adam, with Parson Hawthorne's regards, and let Hawthorne call — they may want him. So much for that; and now for a very

different matter. We are to have a wedding here this evening. Mary and Vernon ——

*Beale.* Is it coming off at last? How things will turn up hafter all! By the royal George, I hopinioned you'd taken a fancy to the girl yourself.

*Lord.* Beale, I know you are not afraid of a pistol, but you haven't an absolute preference for a bullet through your body — have you?

*Beale.* A bullet through my body — a bull-bull-bullet through my bod-bod-body? Not hex-hex-hexactly.

*Lord.* Then no more hopinions. The wedding will be at six; we dine at seven. No company except the Hawthornes and a few of our farmer friends — just enough for an old-fashioned cotillon. Off with you! Sack the hot-house; fringe the drawing-room windows with camellia branches — not a beggarly flower or two. Cut to the root! Scrub up the plate — bring out the old Holmes — and she likes Burgundy — don't forget *that* — she likes Burgundy! Off with you, Beale, — stir up the pastry cook — waylay the butcher — ravage the garden — electrify the kitchen — float us in champagne! Float us in champagne!

*Beale.* My heyes, yes. Float us in champagne! O, we'll 'ave a jolly good time of it!

*Lord.* (*Sinking suddenly down in arm chair on R. H., with his head on table.*) Yes, Beale, a jolly good time of it.

*Beale.* Are you hill, sir? 'Ave you 'ad a hapopliptic strike? May be *your* nerves wants bracing now? Try the same dose you gave me — it braced me beautifully. Hindeed, you're hill, sir.

*Enter JANE, D. F. L. H.*

*Lord.* Not ill, Beale, only lonely — very lonely. Go. I have a deed or two to draw.

*Jane.* (*Advancing tiptoe on L. H.*) What ails him, Beale? Has he caught your lockjaw?

*Beale.* (*Gravely, in a whisper.*) He's lonely, Jane Jones — very lonely. Come, 'elp me. I've orders to razee the japonicas — transplant the 'ot-'ouse — uncork the cellar — cook the garden — roast creation — and play the devil generally. Lend me a 'and — you're good at playing the devil generally.

*Enter MARY, 1 E. R. H.*

'Ave a care, Miss Mary. Don't disturb 'im — 'e 'as hinstruments to draw, and 'e's lonely — very lonely. Come, Jane, I think I see us in heach hother's harms, a floating in champagne.

(*Exeunt BEALE and JANE, 1 E. L. H.*)

*Mary.* Lonely! There are bitterer things than loneliness, at least for a woman. (*Advancing.*) You seem to suffer.

*Lord.* (*Starting up.*) Suffer! A man never suffers.

*Mary.* Without a woman's knowing it. Let us walk. I am too happy to be still. Let us scale those purple hills, where the acorn bounds from its dinted cup, and the chestnut cleaves its velvet nest.

Let us gather the autumn leaves, flushed with the first brilliance of death, and you shall twist them into my wedding wreath. The leaves of November will suit me better than the flowers of May. (*Gradually leading him off, R. H., as she speaks.*) Come, Mr. Cynic, come. (*Exeunt MARY and LORDLY, 1 E. R. H.*)

END OF ACT II.

### ACT III.

SCENE I. — *Library, as in Act II.* BEALE on sofa, L. C., smoking; wine before him on table.

Beale. This is a new brand — not bad. And this wine's huncom-mon good.

*Enter JANE, 1 E. L. H.*

Jane. Well, that's a picter!

Beale. Hartistic — hain't it? Hartistic. Lordly calls it bracing the nerves! What a hidea for a Hart Union. "Bracing the nerves" — Beale, bracing his nerves! (*Rising.*)

Jane. Keep your distance, sir. You needn't embrace my nerves too. Beale, is there to be a fight?

Beale. Not himmediately. We hintend to fatten our man hup first, so as to 'ave a fairer shot at 'im. We don't mean to bother about 'im till hafter we've floated a while in champagne — till hafter the wedding.

Jane. Beale, this wedding's a sin. Vernon hates Stillworth as much as he loves Alice, and he's only marrying her to save her life — as if her life was worth saving. Poor Alice is to be bridesmaid too; she came in a while ago looking like death. Poor, broken-hearted dear — wouldn't it be awful if she dropped down dead at the ceremony?

Beale. Hawful! But I'll tell you, Jane Jones, who'll be much more hapt to drop down dead during the ceremony — and that's your darling Stillworth.

Jane. *She?* There's no die in her.

Beale. She 'ates Vernon full as much as 'e 'ates 'er. Jane Jones, (*whisper,*) if the wictim was but hout of the way, so that Lordly him-self was heligible —

Jane. Well, ain't he "heligible"? Ain't he divorced?

Beale. No, 'e doesn't believe in divorces.

Jane. Well, he can't have long to wait now.

Beale. Yes, 'e may. Wictims is halways very tough — very 'ard to kill. As a general rule, wives never die when you want 'em.

Jane. (*Solemnly.*) Beale, do you really and trully, indeed and double believe that Stillworth and Lordly is seriously inclined to one another?



*Beale.* I do believe and haffirm that they are most decidedly hinchel to heach hother.

*Jane.* If Vernon only knew that, we might save him and Alice yet.

*Beale.* Let 'em go ahead, Jane. It's all one. No matter who's who, so as they float us in champagne !

*Jane.* But it *does* matter. They must be dressing for the wedding now, Stillworth and Alice must. It's high time they were; and I'm going to listen at the keyhole. Brides and bridesmaids always unbosom themselves when they're a dressing for a wedding. May be I can help Vernon yet. So good by, Beale.

*Beale.* Farewell, Jane Jones ! (*Waving his hand pompously.*)

*Jane.* (*Coquettishly.*) I say, Beale, good by !

*Beale.* O, good by; that means, "Come kiss me." Jane Jones, I contemplate hissing a Dictionary, called Beale's Dictionary of Social Syninhims.

*Jane.* Social Singing Hymns, Beale ?

*Beale.* Yes. For hinstance, "You 'ateful man !" Definition, "I love you." — "For Heaven's sake, don't." Definition, "For God's sake, do." — "Blood thirsty murder." Definition, "Moral hinsanity." — "Railway dividends." Definition, "'Orrible catastrophe." — "Modern horiginality." Definition, "Hantiquated habsurdity." — "Good by." Definition, "Kiss me;" and so forth.

*Jane.* (*Approaching him.*) Beale, how would you define this ?

*Beale.* Proceed. Which ? Propound. What ?

*Jane.* (*Slapping him.*) Why — this. Put that in you Dictionary. (*Exit JANE, 1 E. L. H.*)

*Beale.* That's too much of a jaw-breaker for my Dictionary. My nerves want a little more bracing after that. (*Lounging on the sofa and filling his glass.*)

*Enter LORDLY, D. F. L. H. ; sits at table on R. H., unseen by BEALE.*

This is the way to do it. Lordly's a snob, a regular snob. None of the heasy hindifferent ways of our nobs. Why, Lord, it was a spectacle, a real spectacle, to see Lord Littlehead throw 'imself back in 'is horiental dressing gown, hexclaiming 'Beale, a cigar !'

*Lord.* Beale — a cigar !

*Beale.* (*Starting up.*) O, that the hearth would hopen at my feet and 'ide me for hever !

*Lord.* Beale, a cigar ! Isn't that something in my Lord Littlehead's style ?

*Beale.* (*Aside.*) Caught — cornered. He must 'ave 'eard me call 'im a snob, too !

*Lord.* A cigar, you dog ! Is that *snobbish* enough for you ?

*Beale.* (*Aside. Handing the box from table.*) I'm a ruined hindividual ! I've about 'alf hentripped the box, too. But 'e never misses things ; 'e's too simple for that.

*Lord.* (*Taking his box.*) Beale, is this the new brand ?

*Beale.* The new — new — new brand, sir. I hinspected it.

*Lord.* I should think you had *hinspected* it. I see your *mark* — and a pretty deep one it is.

*Beale.* Cigars will *shrink* when they're hopened, sir.

*Lord.* *Shrink*? Yes, and my wardrobe — cellar — pantries — garden — orchard — purse, they all *shrink*, too. Your *mark* is on them all — they are all *hinspected*.

*Beale.* (*Aside.*) So much for calling 'im a snob!

*Lord.* When my Lord Littlehead dismissed you, Beale, he did it helegantly, Beale; didn't he, Beale? It was quite a spectacle to see him hexclaiming, 'Beale, depart!' He led you down stairs by the hand, I suppose.

*Beale.* (*Aside.*) He dragged me down by the 'eels.

*Lord.* But a snob, Beale, I say a *snob*, must indulge his instincts by throwing you out of the window.

*Beale.* (*With immense emotion.*) Pitch away, sir; I 'ave no hexcuses. Let me die!

*Lord.* No, Beale; I intend to let you live — and live with me.

*Beale.* (*Aside.*) I thought my hagonies would fetch him.

*Lord.* I intend to keep you for the following reasons. First, you waited on my father; second, you know too many of my secrets; third, if I let you loose, you'd beggar the whole community with your *inspections* — the whole state would *shrink*; and fourth, because your English flunkey has a genius for being kicked and cuffed about, and I never could find an American with the least talent that way.

*Beale.* (*Aside.*) He's shrinking *me* some, now.

*Lord.* I shall take you to England, and contrive to lose you there. We start this week — to-morrow, perhaps. Pack my trunk to-night. What news from the cottage? Has Hawthorne been there?

*Beale.* I met him on his way from there, and 'e hintimated that the hold man and she is mending — hespecially the hold un; but that 'Arley is wery bad — wery bad hindeed.

*Lord.* Very bad with what?

*Beale.* With what Lord Littlehead's haunt died of, sir, — 'em-morrhage.

*Lord.* Hemorrhage? Poor Harley, is this the end! It seems but yesterday you led us all at college, and prophecies were made of Harley — the promising Harley. You had youth, beauty, genius — and I, money — money alone. How I longed to change lots with you — to buy your gifts with all my father's gold! And yet that gold has been my best friend, and your gifts your worst ruin. Gold and life are lovers — apart, nothing — united, all! But Genius walks the world a whining exile, sighing for the withered laurels of her bridegroom, Death! O, die, die, die! A man of genius is a fool to live! Is it hard to die dishonored, when I find it so easy to live unloved?

*Beale.* He's off. Up in the clouds somewhere. Regular balloon-head. Halways gasing after something or other.

*Lord.* We can't fight a consumptive, Beale; a ball through the lungs would only cure him. Pack up to-night. We're off to-morrow. Send Vernon. Ah —

*Enter* VERNON, L. H. 1 E.

Well met, Vernon. Beale, depart!

*Ver.* Why, Beale, you look as if you had lost all your first cousins.

*Beale.* No, sir; honly a little *shrunk*, sir; honly a little *shrunk*.  
(*Exit* BEALE, L. H. 1 E.)

*Lord.* (*Sitting at table, R. H.*) Vernon, excuse my troubling you with a matter of business on your wedding day; but there is an unsettled account between us.

*Ver.* If you are going to call me to account for my weekly allowance, I fear that a mortgage on my dog and gun will be pretty much all I can give you.

*Lord.* When our dear old father was dying, he called me to his bedside—he disbelieved, at that moment, what the world had said of me; and to atone for having once disinherited me, he made me his sole heir, trusting, of course, that I would do you no injustice. It is now time to show you that this confidence was not misplaced.

*Ver.* Brother, my horse, my dog, and my gun are enough for me. So long as there is a partridge on the hills—a covey in the plain—a duck in the air—I need no other fortune. A place in your heart—a seat at your table—a bed beneath your roof—are all I ask.

*Lord.* I have just left the deeds for record, and transferred the stock. This check (*giving it*) completes the division of our estate. I have kept the homestead for myself, but every thing is fair to a cent. My entries are beautiful—take a look at them. (*Opening books.*) Observe that five— isn't it a beauty?

*Ver.* Do not crush me with your bounty; I have hated you!

*Lord.* I know your heart, boy; I know what was there—pride—jealousy—misconception—but not hatred. You never lived the day you would not have died for me. Love always has a shadow, and we sometimes call it hatred;—but love is love, for all that. You were a little weary of me—my fault, not yours; but I have ordered Beale to pack my trunk for Italy, so that you and Mary will soon be rid of the cynic. By the way, I *did* cheat you. I have just settled a living on old Hawthorne, and charged you for half of it.

*Ver.* (*Leaning on his shoulder.*) By Heaven, George, I can't stand this. One thing at a time; you'll kill me. The words stick here, here in my throat—here. God bless you, brother, for remembering Alice.

*Lord.* We understand each other now. To your bride, boy; it is near the hour, and I have still a deed to execute. To your bride. And, Vernon,—I never met the heart like hers; such radiant insight, such simple faith, such swerveless truth. Wear her in your heart of hearts—you will find her a talisman for every malady. In her father's name, as her protector, friend, and guardian, I give her to you; be faithful to the trust. (*Leading him out.*) To your bride! (*Exit* VERNON, 1 E. L. H.) The last dream is over! On the very threshold of manhood I part with love. As I enter the temple the deity departs, and I find the lamps extinguished and the altar bare. Life without love! I shall get used to it; the hand will cease to

expect the replying pressure, and the eye will cease to ache for the returning glance! Yet it is hard that manhood's only hope should be the aspiration to forget. The last dream is over! (*Exit, 1 E. R. H.*)

SCENE II. — *Antechamber at Domewood, 1 G; C. D. practical. Enter JANE, listening, C. D. L. H.*

*Jane.* Here they come all dressed for the wedding. If they don't have a talk now, they're not fit to be women. (*Retires up softly, R. H.*)

*Enter MARY, with wreath of leaves, and ALICE, C. D. R. H.; then JANE retires quietly at C. D.*

*Alice.* Wear these white flowers; they are so much more appropriate.

*Mary.* We gathered these leaves this morning — Lordly and I. Let me wear them; see how the glory of death has touched them with its first splendor. (*Bends her head.*) Do you remember the ancient custom of adorning the victim? It was the forehead doomed to meet the axe that wore the fillet. (*ALICE fastens the wreath.*) Who is the victim, you or I? You are losing a lover, I am gaining one. Have I a doomed look?

*Alice.* You never looked so happy or so lovely.

*Mary.* I have stolen your sweetheart — can you forgive me? Remember he was mine before he was yours. But I shall not keep him long. Before another summer, you shall have him back again.

*Alice.* It seems to me you jest somewhat bitterly.

*Mary.* Jest? I am in earnest. Wait a while — a little patience — he will come back to you when I am gone.

*Alice.* There is something in your voice that makes me shudder.

*Jane.* (*Aside, C. D.*) The crisis is coming. I knew it. More horrors!

*Mary.* Would you have me live when he does not love me? Do you not see the meaning of these dead leaves?

*Alice.* He loves you — he must — he shall!

*Mary.* Vernon's love ended when mine began. A girl — a child — I knew not I had a heart till I promised my hand. Then, with one wild bound, I sprang from child to woman — I seemed to behold a god — unseen till then, he stood before me in all his majesty and glory!

*Alice.* Of whom do you speak?

*Mary.* Of HIM — the only one! And then there came the fatal knowledge that my love was unreturned. I could bear this — but to see his great mind slowly smouldering out — his great heart mutely stinging itself to death, — to see this, and *feel* that I could make it otherwise, that I could stop this ruin! O, could I take his head between my hands, and write on his forehead that one word, "REST"! O, were he once mine, that I might show the world how woman can wield the might and genius of the man she loves!

*Alice.* He shall be yours, and yours alone.

*Mary.* Have you the sun, the stars, the whole heaven in your gift, that you promise a heart like his? Do you think I spoke of your Vernon? If Vernon loves *you*, may I not have *my* love? I meant to give you your Vernon — give him to you to-day — but I trample on your heart and mine alike, because *he* asks it!

*Alice.* Who? Mr. Lordly? (*In a low tone.*)

*Mary.* Hush! Don't shout it! I know not how it came to pass — but I, who had sat upon his knee and called him father — I, who had feared his moody grandeur — I, his pet, his doll, his plaything, — loved him — loved him in silence and sorrow — with God alone my witness — no mother's feet at which to lay my secret — no sister's breast on which to breathe the tale.

*Alice.* You have found a sister now.

*Mary.* Could you see him as I do — could you live in daily contemplation of his beautiful nature — could you know the one grand deed that man has done — you would realize how soon my love must cost me my life.

*Alice.* But if he knew your love —

*Mary.* He will know it soon. The crossed hands, the parted lips, the open eyes, will tell him soon. He will know it then — I will leave a message or a smile — there will be some sign in the cold face to tell him that I died for him.

*Alice.* I must stop this sacrilege.

*Mary.* Girl, I have trusted to you woman's holiest secret; you dare not forfeit your woman's faith. You, a woman, with those true eyes of yours, carry my confession to the man who loves me not — run to your truant lover with a story of your rival's perfidy? He would scorn you.

*Alice.* Better be scorned even by him I love, than have you perish.

*Mary.* I was woman enough to talk of dying, but do not think me child enough to do it. Do you think I can perish with your noble Vernon at my side?

*Alice.* I must see if my father has come.

*Mary.* (*Seizing her arm.*) Stay! I will not trust you. Mark me — if you turn traitress, I will brand your story as a plot to cheat me of my love. I will beg Vernon, on my knees, to make me his in spite of your calumnies. Stir not; this case is past your cure. Step not between me and my fate. Sacrifice is woman's noblest heritage. May I trust you?

*Alice.* Fear not; your secret is safe.

*Mary.* Pardon the wrong I am doing you; and when the brief injustice is over, visit me sometimes at the sweetbrier in your father's churchyard. I shall be at home when you call. Come, wash away these telltale tears; they must not know you have been weeping. What? A woman, and yet no actress? Come! It is sunset now — sunset for you and me!

(*Exeunt MARY and ALICE, 1 E. R. H.*)

*Jane.* (*At C. D.*) There's a climax! (*Comes down centre.*) Wouldn't I like to see it in print! My! but it would read splendid!

*Enter BEALE, 1 E. L. H.*

*Beale.* The company 'as come, hand the parson's a-comin', hand Mr. Lordly hexpects the ladies in the drawing room. What's the row, Jane Jones? What's out? More 'orrors?

*Jane.* Support me, Beale — I'm himpressed, hovercome! O Beale, wouldn't it read splendid!

*Enter, rapidly, VERNON, 1 E. L. H., pulling on his gloves.*

*Ver.* Well, there's a hand to give a pretty woman — a dainty, delicate collection of fingers! They have split three pair of gloves already — now for the fourth!

*Jane.* (*Breaking from BEALE, and pouncing on VERNON theatrically.*) I have saved you! You'll be happy yet! You'll live to bless the memory of Genevieve Jones!

*Ver.* 'Gad, woman, are you mad?

*Beale.* Mad as her master.

*Jane.* Mad? I'm the only sane character in the plot. I overheard an unbosoming just now between Stillworth and Hawthorne.

*Ver.* Stillworth and Hawthorne! Be civil, you hussy!

*Beale.* (*Aside.*) 'Ussy! I'll resent that.

*Jane.* (*To VERNON.*) Don't roar so — they'll hear us — they're in the next room. Providence has called me to the rescue. Strike, but hear me!

*Ver.* What in the name of the Lord are you driving at? (*JANE whispers in his ear.*)

*Jane.* I've petrified him. Not here — it is too close — (*pointing 1 E. R. H., where MARY and ALICE went off*) — the next room — in the next room. (*Exit JANE, slowly, 1 E. R. H., with much pantomime and many attitudes, followed by VERNON.*)

*Beale.* The next room's 'er hown room! — I'll follow.

(*Exit BEALE, 1 E. B. H., imitating her pantomime.*)

SCENE III. — *Drawing Room, 3 and 5 G. — Table with books and flowers on R. H. L.; 2 chairs, sofa on L. H.; 2 chairs on L. H. — Music. — Cotillon. — The sunset and chapel spire seen through the bay window, in flat. — LORDLY walking apart with HAWTHORNE.*

*Lord.* Isn't that good old-fashioned dance better than the grim weddings they get up nowadays? Weeping relatives — dramatic prayers — Sexton in kids — Herald Reporter. But you were speaking of our poor friends at the cottage. (*Walks apart with HAWTHORNE. As the music ceases, and the dancers pair off and promenade,*

*Enter VERNON, 1 E. L. H. HAWTHORNE mixes with the dancers.*

*Ver.* (*Approaching LORDLY, who is looking through the window.*) Glorious sunset! eh, George?

*Lord.* (*Pointing out through window.*) The sun is a great painter, Vernon. See how those colors are put in; Claude never did that.

Mark the bare branches of that distant tree against the after-glow; it is like the tracery of the Alhambra. How well you look!

*Ver.* And how well I *feel*! But you, you are muffled up in your sorrow like a Spaniard in his cloak. I swear I saw you brush off a tear as I came in. There must be no more tears to-day. I am so full of joy, that I cannot brook a sign of sorrow. It seems to me that all the trees should blossom and all the birds trill out a wedding chorus.

*Lord.* You have reason to be glad.

*Ver.* I never knew till now what good reason. I am overflowing with gladness. How glorious it will be — everlastingly with her! — how we shall listen to the hounds together! — what hecatombs of birds I shall slaughter! And, brother, only think of it — no more poetry — no more Casa Guidi windows — no more Doras — I'll put *them* to death! — and no more *misunderstandings*. Reason to be glad? I have reason to go mad with joy!

*Lord.* You puzzle me with your raptures. However, youth is always a riddle to manhood. I scarcely comprehend your excessive mirth.

*Ver.* Blind as a mole, I have just recovered my sight — is not that motive enough for merriment? Do you know I thought you loved Mary — thought you were surrendering her to me, because you felt yourself too old to keep her for yourself — thought —

*Lord.* (*Deeply moved.*) Vernon?

*Ver.* He loves her! (*aside.*) — Don't frown on me, brother — I see now how absurd it was. The idea — you of all other men — you wrapped up in your books and papers — your verses and accounts — you condescending to love any body? And yet I was moping — miserable — pestering myself about your self-sacrifice for me. Well, it has pleased Heaven to open my eyes, and I am in this ecstasy, because I now know that nobody's going to be killed by *misunderstandings*.

*Enter MARY and ALICE, and after them, move in the rear, BEALE and JANE.*

*Mary.* (*Gayly.*) Mr. Hawthorne, I shall ever thank you for your care of my father's legacy. That letter has made this match. (*To LORDLY.*) Did you not anticipate the festival of this evening, when you gave me these gems this morning? (*Pointing to her bracelets.*)

*Lord.* (*Taking her apart.*) No, but I did when I ventured to make you another gift. Vernon is a generous, extravagant dog — and as I shall be abroad — many years perhaps — well, this deed (you can fill in the trustee's name — I left a blank) — this deed (*producing it*) will enable you to keep the axe from these trees around us.

*Mary.* (*Taking the deed.*) You mean that this paper makes Domewood mine?

*Lord.* I shall only stipulate for my library, in case we ever meet again.

*Mary.* We cannot fail to meet again. I shall wait in one spot for your coming! (*The tolling of the chapel bell heard in the distance, and commotion among the guests. A pause of astonishment, during which the tolling continues.*) Hear that music, George. The bells you gave the chapel, my first birthday at Domewood.

*Lord.* A knell? Stop it, Beale, (*exit BEALE,*) and bid them chime a wedding peal.

*Haw.* I was not aware of any funeral. They must be tolling for some departed public man.

*Jane.* More 'orrors.

*Ver.* (*Merrily.*)

Bridal bell,  
Or rising knell,  
All the same,  
Save in name. (*The tolling ceases.*)

There's poetry for you, George, impromptu. Can you beat it?

*Mary.* (*To LORDLY.*) Do you remember how you served the verses? (*Tearing the deed.*) We are even now. Come, Vernon. (*Extending her hand.*)

*Ver.* One word in your ear. Excuse us, George. (*Leading her forward.*) You had a conversation with Alice —

*Mary.* Has she betrayed me?

*Ver.* I overheard it. (*Aside.*) Jane shan't suffer. You perceive that this mockery cannot proceed; you must decline my hand; you must stop this ceremony.

*Mary.* Let it go on. I will learn to love you. I will do for you all that woman can do for the man she loves. I will watch your sickness, cheer your sorrow, share your pleasures. You know not what joy, what beauty, I can throw around your life.

*Ver.* It matters not so much for me. But I begin to love you, Mary; and I love that knightly, unselfish brother of mine; and I mean to save you both from this abyss of your own creation; I mean to make two hearts supremely happy; I mean to make your birthday holy, and not accursed. If you do not speak, I must.

*Mary.* Vernon, Vernon, for God's sake, spare me.

*Ver.* Reject me, or I must reject you.

*Mary.* (*Clinging to him.*) Vernon, you are a man; you cannot know a woman's agony of shame; but by your manhood, spare her weakness. Come! they are watching us — his eyes are on us. Come, my brother, my husband, spurn me not from you. I am yours.

*Lord.* (*Advancing, R.*) What is this?

*Ver. L.* Nothing you may not hear. Closer, brother. From my birth you have been my benefactor. I cannot remember the day that has not brought me some token of your love; within an hour you have enriched me with half your estate. I am about to discharge the debt, with interest. I am about to give you something better than fortune, something holier than friendship — a true woman's heart. Take her; she is yours.

*Mary. L.* No, I am ready, Vernon — ready. (*As she totters, LORDLY catches her.*)

*Lord.* Have you given me a corpse? (*Bending over her.*) Mr.



Hawthorne — Alice — support her. (*Sternly confronting VERNON.*) I forewarned you of this.

*Ver.* Blow my brains out. I deserve it. What have I done? I meant to bless her. Have I killed her?

*Lord.* Calm yourself. It happens well that this house is still mine. I desire you to leave it at once — forever. You and I, sir, are henceforth strangers.

*Ver.* Something is choking me. I cannot speak. Brother, I have saved you *from a murder!*

*Lord.* (*Pointing to her.*) By committing it yourself?

*Ver.* Hear me, George; brother, hear me. The misunderstanding that was killing her was your blindness. For you, for you alone have her health and youth been wasted. To please *you*, to do your bidding, she promised to be mine. Take her to your heart; she would have died at your command. There stands the witness to her words. (*Pointing to ALICE.*)

*Lord.* (*Violently grasping her arm.*) Girl, is this true? Answer. (*She bows.*)

*Ver.* Don't stand there cowering and trembling. Lift her to your heart.

*Lord.* Lift her to my heart — lift her with these manacled hands — with these fettered fingers? Don't you see the chain I wear? Don't you see the print of the iron on my wrist, its rust in my soul? (*In a whisper.*) *My wife lives!*

*Ver.* Lives!

*Adam.* (*Without.*) Dead, dead, dead!

(*Enter ADAM, supported by BEALE.*)

Dead, dead! They lie there side by side. I tolled the bell for them. How I love to toll! Ding, dong! ding, dong! (*Feebly attempting to toll.*) Who can toll like Adam? Ding, dong! ding, dong!

*Lord.* Gently, Beale; he's dying. Vernon, lay him carefully on the lounge. — (*To BEALE.*) Is it as he says?

*Beale.* I found him a tollin' away, and 'e 'ad reason, for all was hover with both.

*Lord.* (*Approaching MARY, who has risen, and is leaning on ALICE's shoulder.*) I have loved you for years, humbly, truly, tenderly, in spite of reason, in spite of fate. This is my one remaining secret — I lay it at your feet.

*Beale.* (*To JANE.*) It will 'ardly be necessary, Jane, to pack 'is trunk to-night.

*Jane.* Look at the patriarch, Beale; he's on his feet again.

*Adam.* (*Rising between VERNON and HAWTHORNE.*) The mist breaks; the lead melts. Mr. Lordly here! Quick, quick! (*Sinking back.*)

*Lord.* (*Advancing to him with MARY.*) Death's benediction — returning reason.

*Adam.* It is you. Yes, I know you; there is but one such face; you are older than you were. Ah me — when — how long — how long ago! What a night — what a long, dark night since then!

*Haw.* He begins to wander again.

*Adam.* My wanderings are over. One straight path now, Mr. Hawthorne, the path you taught me. — (*To LORDLY.*) Let them fall back — fall back — all but you — you and her. (*Taking MARY's hand.*) She looks so like — Dead, dead, dead! (*LORDLY motions them back, and he and MARY group themselves around the lounge.*) (*Suddenly.*) Do you know what drove me mad? They loved each other before you knew her. I coaxed her and cursed her till she took you for your gold. That's why I'm mad, and she's dead. Ding, dong! ding, dong!

*Lord.* The last sparks of his life are throwing light on mine.

*Adam.* Let me take her your pardon; she's waiting for it in the grave. I promised, yes, I swore I would bring it.

*Lord.* Take it.

*Adam.* (*Raising his head.*) Stay; it is all so clear now. O, this peace, this painless peace — this perfect light! I know you all — all. And you, (*to MARY,*) you were a child then; and now — yes, there's your veil — and now a bride. Whose? I know, I know; answer not. Mr. Hawthorne, join their hands, I dare not. The light is dying; quick, quick; thus. Do not toll for me; let me hear the chimes. — (*To LORDLY.*) The chimes you gave us, ah, so long ago; the chimes I rang on our first feast of Mary's birthday! Hark, hark! I hear them — the chimes of Mary's birthday. (*Feebly moving his hands. Dies as if asleep. The chime of distant bells. Tableau. Curtain.*)

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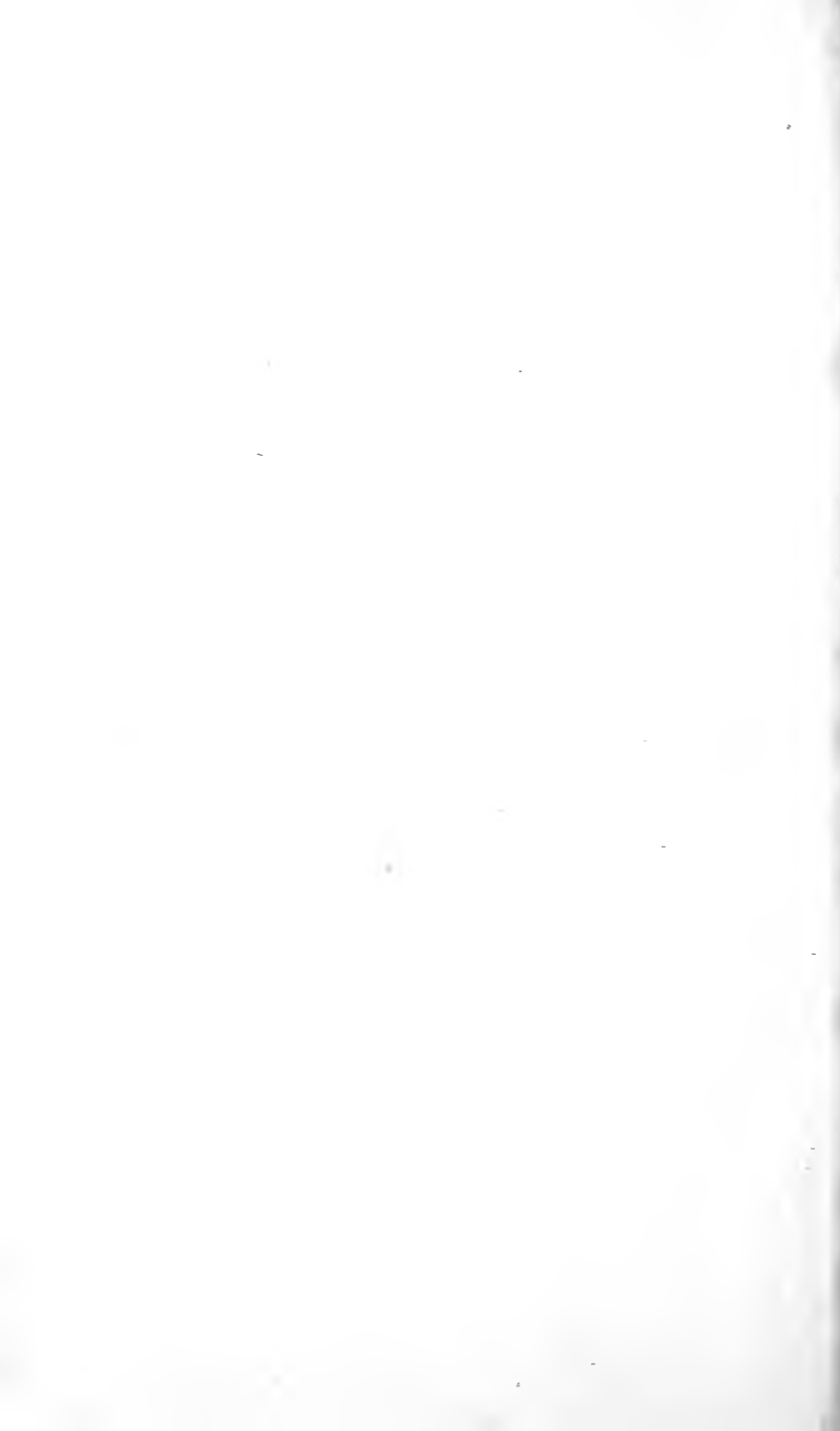














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